

ORAL HEALTH IN COMPREHENSIVE CLEFT CARE

- ✓ Lift the lip and look inside once a month

First steps when checking a child's oral health:

1. Wash your hands, or wear disposable gloves.
2. Position the child's head on your lap, sit facing each other, or lie the child down on a couch or bed.
3. Lift the lip and look at the child's teeth and gums. What do you see?

What should your child's teeth look like?

- Clean
- Unbroken surfaces
- Gums should be firm to the touch, not red and not tender or swollen



If your child has tooth decay you might notice:



- 1 **White spots or white lines on the tooth.**
This is early decay and you need to see an oral health professional.



- 2 **Brown spots or cavities.**
This is decay and you need to see an oral health professional urgently.



- 3 **Advanced decay or broken teeth.**
This is severe decay and may cause your child pain. You should urgently see an oral health professional.



What else might you see if your child has oral health problems?



- Colour changes to the tooth surface, like white or brown spots
- Cavities
- Broken teeth
- Swollen or bleeding gums
- Dental plaque

How can you prevent oral diseases?

- Lift the lip monthly to check for early signs of tooth decay.
- Brush twice daily, for 2 minutes with fluoride toothpaste from the eruption of the first tooth. Spit out the toothpaste but do not rinse away the residue.
- Wipe the baby's mouth after each feed and before bed.
- Make healthy food and drink choices, without added sugar.
- Don't put sweeteners (honey, sugar, fruit juices) in the child's bottle or sippy cup.
- Visit your oral health professional regularly and before the child's first birthday.



Content developed by the Oral Health in Comprehensive Cleft Care Task Team: P. Mossey, Muthu MS, H. Zhu, M. Campodonico, L. Orenuga with thanks to the "Toothy Tigers".

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